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RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 3562
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 000628

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; DRL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMEN DELEGATION TO UN IN VIENNA PRESENTS LIST
OF HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Richard Miles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On May 15, a Western embassy passed to post a copy of the Note Verbale sent by the Permanent Mission of Turkmenistan (to the United Nations office in Vienna) to the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 3, ¶2009. The list contains a total of 78 people who can be classified as prisoners of conscience or Human Rights cases. The vast majority of names on the list--53--constitute some but not all of those who were jailed in connection with the attack on the former president's motorcade in November 2002.

The only new information provided is the citing of the criminal code articles under which they were prosecuted. Some listings state that the person has freedom of movement now. One is acknowledged to have died as a result of suicide. Curiously, in seven of the 2002 cases, the sentence terms are different than published in January 2003--one is shorter, the rest are longer, according to the document.

¶2. (C) Eleven of those listed are Jehovah's Witnesses who were either prosecuted for their conscientious objection to military service, or who were known human rights cases based on their reports of beatings and detentions by Turkmen authorities. Two others are other well-known religious freedom cases, one of whom (Kalatayevsky) was deported to Ukraine. Four are journalist cases, including those of Victor Panov, deported to Russia, Kakabay Tejenov, RFE/RL, who served time in a psychiatric institution, Nurberdy Nurmammedov, a former political activist and sometime commentator on RFE/RL, and Ogulsapar Muradova, who died in detention in 2006. No additional information was provided in these cases, and although mentioned, there was no information at all on the status of the other two 2006 journalist arrest cases of Sapardurdy Khajiyev and Annakurban Annaklychev.

¶3. (C) It identifies the following people as having been released after having served their terms: Tashliyeva, Khaidov, Mitogorov (a Jehovah's Witness), Nasirov (also a JW), Zakirov (also JW), and Seidov (list claims he was pardoned, but in fact he served out his term, according to published information). Two of the cases ended with deportation: Victor Panov and Vyacheslav Kalatayevsky. Three other Jehovah's Witnesses were listed as pardoned, as was human rights case Valeriy Pal.

14. (C) COMMENT: The document stated that there would be "additional information" on these cases, and that "the overwhelming majority of the individual cases have been resolved positively under the new leadership of Turkmenistan." However, the list reflects the static situation in relation to those caught up in the 2002 attack, and provides little additional information regarding the current status or condition of many prisoners. However, at least it officially confirms information already known. It is probably an attempt by the government to be somewhat transparent. Institute of Democracy and Human rights Director Shirin Akhmedova told us earlier that during her most recent time representing Turkmenistan before the Human Rights Council in Geneva, she felt that she was being scolded like a school girl. END COMMENT.
MILES